

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE
Public Health Service
Indian Health Service

Refer to: CMO

ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 89-02

EMPLOYEE HIV/AIDS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the causative agent of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), has been shown to be spread by sexual contact, by parenteral exposure to blood (most often through intravenous (IV) drug abuse), and rarely, by other exposures to blood, and from an infected woman to her fetus or infant. There are certain groups of people who are at greatest risk of HIV infection:

- A. Homosexual and bisexual males.
- B. Persons with a history of intravenous drug use.
- C. Persons who have received blood or blood component transfusions between 1978 and 1985; i.e., hemophiliacs, surgery, etc.
- D. Prostitutes.
- E. All sexual partners of the above risk groups.
- F. Infants born to HIV-infected mothers.

Although the rate of transmission in the general population is very low (less than 1%), there are reports of HIV transmission from persons infected with the virus to health care workers. However, there is no evidence of HIV transmission from an infected health care worker to patients. It is clear now that there is no risk of transmission from casual contact, such as, that which takes place between a health care worker and their colleagues in a hospital, clinic, or ancillary service setting. No reports exist of opportunistic infection transmission such as those that may affect persons with AIDS, to patients from hospital employees.

Distribution: All Indian Health Manual Holders
All Albuquerque Area IHS Employees

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It has been estimated that approximately 3% of all AIDS cases involve health care workers. Most of these cases are members of high risk groups. Present guidelines recommend that asymptomatic health care workers with HIV infection not be precluded from employment("CDC recommendations for preventing possible transmission of infection with human T-lymphocyte virus, Type III/lymphadenopathy associated virus in the workplace," MMWR, 1985; 34:681-6, 691-5, and the "CDC recommendations for preventing transmission of infection with human T-lymphotropic virus Type III/lymphadenopathy associated virus during invasive procedures," MMWR, 1968; 35:221-3.)

Those of the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service involved with HIV infection and related matters, feel that it is important to consider appropriate infection control measures for HIV infected health care workers for their own medical, social, and economic protection; as well as for the emotional and medical well-being of other health care workers and patients.

2. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to manage and protect employees of the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service in relation to HIV/AIDS, including those who may request, or who may be defined as being in need of, testing for HIV antibody, and to provide guidelines to manage and protect those known to be HIV positive. These guidelines are based on public health and employee safety considerations, including the principles of counseling before and after testing, and insuring confidentiality of personnel information.

3. GOALS

- A. To provide HIV testing and education to all employees and to focus efforts on high risk behavior and HIV epidemiology.
- B. To protect all employees and patients from transmission of HIV.
- C. To protect all employees with HIV infection from social, medical, or economic discrimination and ostracism in the workplace.

4. GUIDELINES

- A. Education - Each Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service employee will participate in a comprehensive (documented) HIV/AIDS educational program:
- B. Protection - Each Service Unit is required to supply employees with the appropriate protective items necessary to their job duties for the patients -and employees from HIV. Service Unit policies must be written consistent with CDC universal blood and body fluid precautions.

- C. Counseling - All Service Units may identify voluntary personnel to form "HIV/AIDS Counseling Teams." The Area Office holds the responsibility of providing appropriate training to identified team members. On request, counseling will be provided to employees with HIV positivity, to employees requesting HIV testing, and to clarify issues for all employees.

Each employee found with evidence of HIV infection will be counseled regarding steps to take in order to avoid transmitting the HIV to patients or to those with whom the employee may have intimate contact with. She/he will be counseled regarding adoption of a life to a symptomatic state.

- D. Testing - The Employee Health Program for all Indian Health Service employees will be expanded to include voluntary HIV testing for any employee. The requested testing will occur outside of the Indian Health Service system if the employee so desires.

(I) All employees with HIV+ test results will notify the Clinical Director or CMO of that fact.

(2) Each employee with HIV positivity or AIDS will be treated on a case by case basis after consultation with the employee's physician and the Clinical Director or CMO to determine if:

- a. the employee is free from transmissible infections,
- b. the employee is not unduly susceptible to infections she/he might come in contact with as a result of performing patient care duties,
- c. the employee may return to work without restrictions, or
- d. the employee is either too ill or is in a communicable state from another infectious disease and is unable to work at this time, or
- e. reassignment is indicated to a non-patient care position in order to protect the employee from nosocomial pathogens. Any personnel action paperwork will note the restrictions, not the diagnosis, or
- f. the employee should be declared disabled by the Clinical Director or CMO due to disease progression.

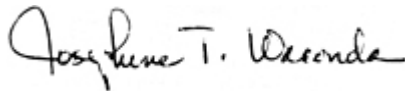
- E. Confidentiality - All information collected in connection with medical testing, and treatment of employee with HIV positivity will be fully protected from unauthorized disclosure.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

This Albuquerque Area HIV/AIDS Policy is to be implemented immediately, to protect all employees and patients. It will be enforced in accordance with appropriate laws and regulations and within sound management principles.

6. SUPERSESSION

None.



Josephine T. Waconda,
Assistant Surgeon General
Director, Albuquerque Area
Indian Health Service